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Inquiry Submittal

**Lynch Canyon Watershed Restoration**

Applicants

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*And*

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**Project Description and Ecological Objectives:** This proposal seeks funding to implement the restoration of the Lynch Creek watershed in the 1,309-acre Lynch Canyon property acquired by the Solano County Farmlands and Open Space Foundation (Foundation) in June 1996. Goals are to manage the watershed as open space for the continuance of existing agricultural uses (*i.e.*, livestock grazing) in a manner that fosters protection and restoration of riparian, aquatic stream habitats, and oak woodland habitats and reduces downstream erosion and sedimentation of aquatic habitats, including Suisun Marsh. Primary ecological objectives are:

- Restore and enhance riparian habitat values on the stream channel for neotropical migratory birds, California red-legged frog, and other resident and migratory wildlife;
- Reduce erosion and sediment sources within the Lynch Creek watershed which significantly contribute to downstream sedimentation in American Canyon Creek and Suisun Marsh;
- Enhance nesting and rearing habitat for waterfowl;
- Foster research on and provide demonstration projects for environmentally compatible livestock grazing practices; and
- Promote public education relative to watershed management, riparian and wetland restoration, and preservation of existing agricultural values and uses of the land.

**Approach, Tasks, and Schedule:** The Foundation's fundamental approach is to manage the Lynch Canyon Open Space in a manner that will preserve the site's historic uses for livestock grazing while promoting public access and appreciation of the site's agricultural heritage, to enhance riparian and aquatic habitat values, and to repair current erosion problems which affect on and offsite aquatic resource values. Specifically, the Foundation is requesting funding to implement the aspects of the management plan for the open space related to Category III ecosystem restoration priorities.

This includes:

1. Request for funding for \$175,000 for the final payment on the acquisition costs (completion date: May 1, 1998);
2. Implement watershed / management plan components related to erosion control, riparian restoration, grazing management (completion date June 1, 1999); and
3. Provide an endowment to allow Foundation (which will be matched) to hire a part-time steward for long-term operation and maintenance of Lynch Canyon.

**Project Justification:** The project is consistent with CALFED Category III funding requirement because it will provide significant restoration and enhancement benefit to riparian and aquatic habitats, benefiting migratory birds and California red-legged frogs. The project will also provide a demonstration site for grazing management practices to enhance riparian and aquatic habitat values. The project will also repair identified high erosion sites and contribute to the reduction of excessive sediment sources to the western edge of Suisun Marsh that will benefit resident and anadromous fish such as steelhead, Delta smelt, splittail, and striped bass.

**Budget Costs and Third party Impacts:** The total CALFED funding request is \$350,000 to \$500,000 depending upon in-kind support and matching funds. SCFOSF has already expended approximately \$4.2 million of non-CALFED funding for the purchase of the open space and \$20,000 for the contract to prepare the management plan.

**Applicant Qualifications:** The primary mission of the Foundation is to preserve open space and farmlands throughout Solano County. Currently, the Foundation owns 3200 acres and manages an additional 3300 acres under contracts with The Nature Conservancy, DFG and Fairfield. To finance acquisitions, the Foundation has raised over \$5.2 million from local, state and federal sources. The Foundation has received restoration grants from the Coastal Conservancy and initiated projects on Laurel Creek and Suisun Creek.

**Monitoring and Data Evaluation:** Data will be collected on a) wildlife species, b) habitat parameters, c) restoration success in wetlands and adjacent uplands, and d) reduction in erosion and sedimentation. Data will be evaluated to provide measures of success for adaptive management. Summaries will be sent to relevant experts and University of California scientists for peer review.

**Local Support and Coordination/Compatibility with CALFED Objectives:** Community support is widespread and includes conservationists, local ranchers, and recreational users such as hikers, bicycle riders, and equestrian users. At other Foundation properties, including the Rush Ranch, interested users have formed volunteer programs where individuals and groups donate in-kind time and materials. Existing volunteer groups are already committed to supporting Lynch Canyon, and two volunteer events have taken place.